

The Khedive of Egypt--An Interview With His Highness in the Abdine Palace--How This Mohammedan Ruler Lives and Works

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Cairo.
I have just had an audience with His Royal Highness the Khedive of Egypt. The meeting was arranged by the diplomatic agent of the United States, and it took some time to bring it about. The Khedive is the Mohammedan ruler of these 10,000,000 Egyptians, and the many tribes of the Sudan bow down to him as their chief. Although the country is really ruled by the English, the Khedive holds the place of King in the minds of the people. He lives in great state and appreciates the dignity of his position. It was only through letters of introduction which I have from Washington that I was able to enter his presence. My appointment came from the grand master of ceremonies of the Abdine palace. The letter from the Khedive was written in French, and it informed me that His Royal Highness would receive me Tuesday afternoon.

When I arrived at the palace I found a regiment of soldiers drilling in front of it and a company of fierce looking Arabs on guard at the door. These men presented arms as I entered. I first came into a hall where other dark headed guards in full uniform stood, and I passed between these to the foot of the grand staircase, where one of the Cabinet ministers met me. With him I walked up to the second floor of the palace, and was taken into a great parlor, where I waited until the exact moment for my interview came.

Tewfik Pasha's Throne Room.
As I looked about this room I recognized it as the audience chamber in which the father of this Khedive, Tewfik Pasha, had received me when he was ruler of the country now more than twenty-one years ago. At that time I had a most remarkable interview with him, and as I looked about me the man and his words came to my mind.

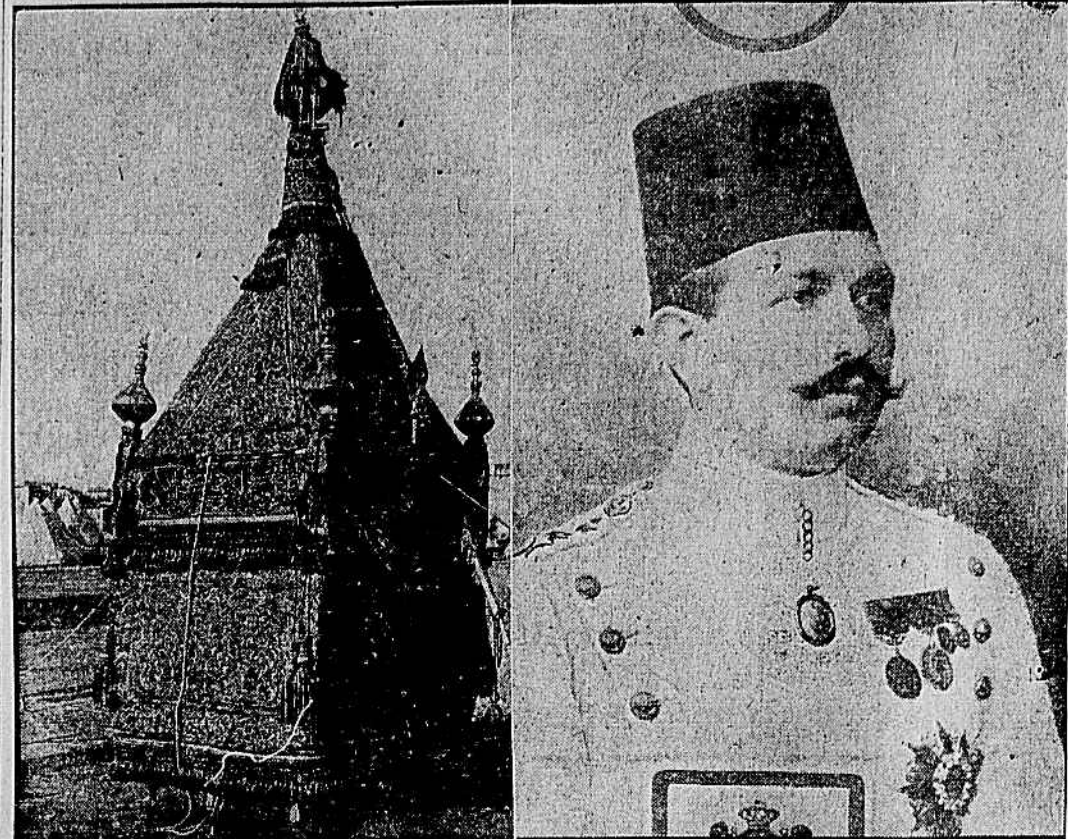
The room is the same as it was then, all of the furniture being European, notwithstanding Egypt is a land of the Orient. The sofas and chairs are of carved woodwork painted white and plated with gold. They are upholstered in white brocade satin, decorated with flowers, and the carpet of European make is woven in one piece. At one end of the room is a great, broad, carved sofa, as wide as a Turkish divan. It was upon this sofa that His Highness Tewfik sat as he chatted with me about himself and his country. He spoke English well and talked freely about the then condition of Egypt and his future. He was not averse to speaking of religion and his Mohammedan subjects, and he spoke a little concerning himself.

Tewfik Versus Abbas.
Since then great changes have taken place in Egypt. The present Khedive's father was always afraid of assassination, and when he suddenly died it was supposed that he was carried off by poison. I asked him how he liked the life of a Khedive. He replied: "I don't like it. I am told that many people envy me and think that my lot must be a pleasant one. They do not understand the troubles that surround me. I have seen many a time when I should have been glad to have laid down all the honors I have for rest and peace. My ten years of reign have been equal to forty years of worry, and if life were a matter of pleasure I would be a fool to remain on the throne. I believe, however, that God put man into the world for a purpose other than pleasure. It is duty that is man's chief end. I am trying to do what I can for my country and people, and I am happiest when I am working the hardest."

These words were uttered after the English had taken hold of the Egyptian situation. As you will remember, they came in at the end of Arabia Pasha's rebellion, and after they had put down the revolution of the Mahdi. Tewfik was ground between the upper and nether millstones of the rebels and the English, and his bed was never one of roses.

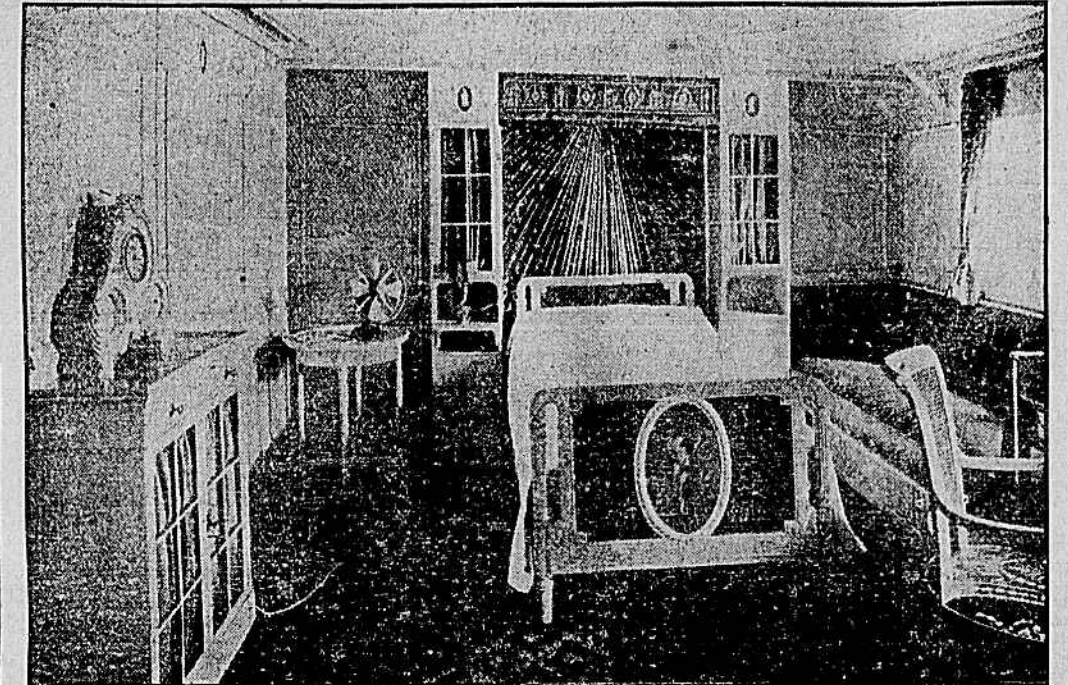
Mohammedan Customs.
Both Tewfik and Abbas have upheld the principles of Mohammedanism. During my talk with Tewfik cigarettes were brought in, and I was offered a smoke. Observing that His Highness did not take a cigarette, I refused, and a moment later I asked the Khedive if he did not smoke. He replied that he neither smoked nor drank, and that he did not drink because it was against the laws of life as laid down in the Koran. I understand that the present Khedive never touches tobacco or intoxicating liquors, and that he is almost as good a Mussulman as his father. He has recently gained great favor with his subjects, not only in Egypt but in the Sudan, by making a pilgrimage to Mecca, and the fact that he has increased the size of his harem will probably be another point in his favor.

As to Tewfik Pasha, he told me that he could recite the Koran backward from beginning to end. He knew the whole book by heart, and could commence at any place and recite back and forth. He said that he thought every man should be faithful to the beliefs of his fathers, and that he was in favor of religious toleration. He went to mosque regularly, and urged the pushing of the Mohammedan religion. Abbas is also regular in his mosque attendance, but I doubt whether



THE HOLY CARPET WHICH THE KHEIDIVE SENT TO MECCA.

THE KHEIDIVE OF EGYPT.



A BEDROOM ON THE KHEIDIVE'S YACHT.

or he is doing anything outside that and his pilgrimage.

The Khedive in 1910.

As I was thinking of these things a stately official in dark clothes and red fez cap entered and told me His Highness was ready to see me. He then led me out of the room and across the hall into another parlor, which was equally large. As we entered a straight, stout young man, with fair hair and blond mustache, came forward and offered me his hand. It was the young Khedive, whom I had met when I was in Egypt four years ago. He greeted me with a welcome back to Egypt, saying that he considered it a compliment to his country that the Americans who came invariably returned. His Highness led the way to a sofa near the window, and motioned me to a chair at his side. When he sat down himself he put one foot under him and sat upon that. I remembered that his father had sat the same way. The Khedive maintained this position during the half hour of our audience.

As we talked I had an excellent opportunity to study the man. His Highness is about five feet eight tall, and he weighs perhaps 170 pounds. He is as straight as an arrow, and the red fez which he invariably wears makes him look taller.

Many Americans think all of the people of this part of the world have dark complexions. That of the Khedive is fair, and his bronze cheeks are rosy. He wore to-day a black frock suit, a fashionable necktie, and with the exception of his fez, his costume would not have been out of place in any American club. Our conversation was carried on in English, which his Highness speaks with a slight German accent, probably from the German professor who taught him that language. He was, you know, educated in Vienna, and it is said that he speaks French, German,

English, Turkish and Arabic with great fluency, while he is conversant with several other languages.

A Talk About Farming.

Before going to the palace I had been warned that his Highness would not discuss politics, and I therefore turned the conversation to farming. The Khedive is one of the largest farmers of the Nile Valley. He has stock ranches, cotton plantations and grain fields galore. He is a successful developer of real estate propositions. He takes up cheap lands and by means of irrigation and drainage makes them double and treble in value. He says that draining is quite as important for Egypt as irrigation, and that there are vast territories here which proper drainage might bring into use. This is so of some lakes near Alexandria. There is just as much danger from an oversupply as from an undersupply of the Nile waters. The floods contain a certain amount of salts of one kind or another, which are injurious to the crops if the water lies too long upon the land, and this has to be removed.

During my talk with his Highness I asked him as to his farming, and whether he really gave it his personal attention. He replied that he did so, and that he was in telephonic connection with each of his estates and received daily reports from all of them.

We talked of the fertilization of the Nile Valley. The Khedive said that the land was exceedingly rich, but that it could be improved by adding phosphates and other artificial manures. He told me that farming was improving throughout Egypt, and that the Agricultural Department was teaching the people the value of good seed and of intensive cultivation.

I asked him what would be the effect of the raising of the dam at Assuan. He answered that it would double the quantity of water that is now being held back, and that it will

add millions of acres to cultivated Egypt. He says that the government has other schemes under way which will materially increase the farming possibilities of his country.

The Khedive's Big Farms.

During his conversation his Highness spoke at length as to some of his farms, suggesting that I might find it interesting to visit them. He has redeemed over 2,000 acres not far from Cairo. The land was poor and swampy, and some of it was desert. His Highness drained and irrigated it and it now brings in an enormous revenue.

He has another big farm near Alexandria and another at Koubbeh. The latter estate is a model plantation of 800 acres. It is equipped with the most scientific machinery and implements, and its buildings comprise a model village, with which is connected a school club, a mosque and an up-to-date fire station. The Khedive has breeding establishments there, and he imports the finest cattle and poultry.

He is noted as a horse lover, and has recently inaugurated a company to improve the blood of the Egyptian horse. His position is such that he can get the finest of the Arabian sires and the best pure-blooded stallions from Nejd, Arabia, are sent to him by the Bedouin sheiks. He is also interested in camel and mule breeding, and has some of the swiftest of dromedaries. Some of his camels can travel seventy-five miles a day, and are worth as much as the finest horse. His Highness exhibits at many of the agricultural shows, and is often among the prize winners there.

His Daily Life.

During our talk I asked the Khedive as to his daily life. He replied that he had all he could do from daylight to dark, but that he believed in hard

work and thrived upon it. In addition to his official duties, which are many, he has the management of his own estates and various enterprises. He said that many of his days from 9 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night were taken up at the palace.

From other sources I learned that the Khedive is almost as strenuous as Theodore Roosevelt. He rises at 5 o'clock in the morning, and, after dressing and attending prayers at a mosque, he takes a long drive in a carriage or motor car through one of his farms. Sometimes he goes on parade and attends a review of troops. He is usually back for breakfast at 7:30, or rather for his cup of coffee, for he takes little else. After this he looks over his official papers until noon, when he has lunch, or breakfast, as it is called here. After breakfast he chats with his visitors and gives receptions of one kind or another, and then reads or works away until sunset, when he again goes to his farms. At 7 or 8 o'clock he is back in the palace for dinner, and his evenings are spent with his family.

The Khedive is a sportsman. He rides well and shoots reasonably well, and like our own strenuous ex-President, can wear out almost any man of his suite.

The Palaces of the Khedive.

The Khedive has a half-dozen palaces. The Abdine Palace, where I was received, is his chief official residence. It is a straggling pile, and white building with a grand staircase, enormous rooms and gorgeous furniture. It is lighted with electric lights and carpeted with rugs mostly from Europe. The furniture is European.

The Khedive's bedroom has a marble bathroom attached, with special arrangements for shower and douche, but there is no Turkish bath, as in the homes of most Oriental rulers. His study looks like a workroom. It has a big library table in the center, and his Highness has a telephone always at hand. The ballroom of this palace is large, and it is especially gay every winter on the occasion of the Khedive's annual ball, to which 1,500 guests are invited. Connected with this room high up is a lattice work, through which the veiled ladies of the royal harem can peep down and watch the dancers while they listen to the strains of the band.

Another official palace is that of Ras-el-Ten, at Alexandria. This lies right on the harbor, with a beautiful outlook over the Mediterranean Sea. His favorite residence near Alexandria is at Montaza, which is within a mile of Aboukir Bay, made famous by Nelson's victory over the French fleet there about a century ago. This latter estate was reclaimed from the desert only a few years since. It has now forests of quick-growing trees and parks which have been stocked with game from Europe. The Khedive has a camel corps on the farm, and he starts out from there with Bedouin riders to make long excursions into the desert. The place lies right on the sea, and the Khedive's yacht is often seen there at anchor.

His royal Highness has a turbine yacht which is said to be one of the finest on the Mediterranean. It was originally a two-funneled paddle steamer of about eleven knots, built forty or more years ago. This was sent back to Glasgow and rearranged throughout. The ship has now four turbines and three screws. It is beautifully furnished in European style, and its appointments are those of a millionaire.

A Rich Ruler.
As to the wealth of the Khedive, he has, I doubt not, millions and to spare. He is a money maker as well as a money saver, and the English government allows him out of the revenues of the country \$500,000 a year. He has single estates which will, I venture, approximate a million dollars each in actual value, and stocks and bonds in many of the best institutions of Egypt. He owns apartment houses in

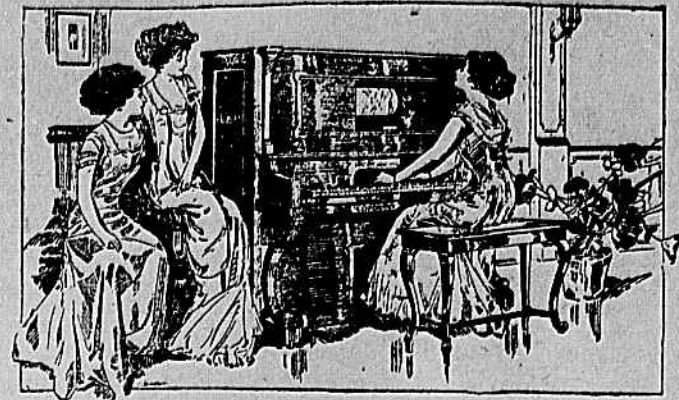
Cairo, cotton plantations in the delta, and much land which would sell at auction for from \$500 to \$1,000 per acre.

His Highness has good business judgment, and everything he touches seems to turn into money. His subjects often criticize the simplicity of his living, and say it would be better for the country if he spent, as his old grandfather Ismail did, tens of thousands of dollars a month on entertainments of one kind or other.

The Khedive's Family.

The Khedive was married years ago, and has five children, all by that wife,

According to the Koran, he has the right to four wives and any number of concubines, and a story is current that he has increased his harem within the past few months. It is not polite to ask a Mohammedan as to the ladies of his family, and practically nothing is known of what goes on in the royal harem. The Khedive's children consist of four girls and a boy, the latter being the heir to the throne. In addition to these he has a brother, the Prince Mohammed Ali, two uncles, and an aunt, all of whom are prominent features of this city of Cairo. (Copyright, 1910, by Frank G. Carpenter.)



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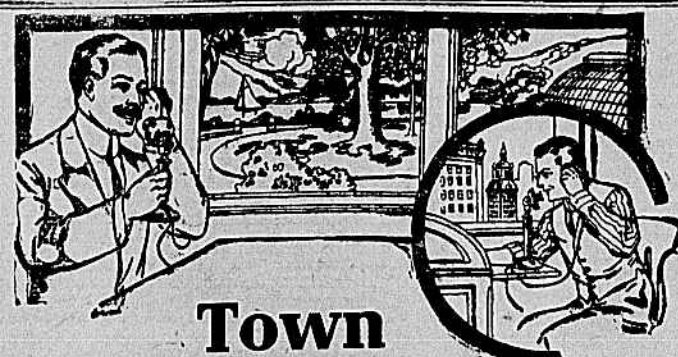
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